

ELECTRON-EMITTING DEVICE, ELECTRON-EMITTING APPARATUS,
IMAGE DISPLAY APPARATUS, AND LIGHT-EMITTING APPARATUS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an electron-emitting device, an electron-emitting apparatus, an electron source and an image-forming apparatus. The present invention also relates to a display apparatus
10 such as a television broadcast display, a display for use in a video conference system or a computer display, and to an image-forming apparatus designed as an optical printer using a photosensitive drum or the like.

15 Related Background Art

A field emission (FE) type of electron-emitting device which emits electrons from a surface of a metal when a strong electric field of 10^6 V/cm or higher is applied to the metal, and which is one of the known
20 cold cathode electron sources, is attracting attention.

If the FE-type cold electron source is put to practical use, a thin emissive type image display apparatus can be realized. The FE-type cold electron source also contributes to reductions in power
25 consumption and weight of an image display apparatus.

Fig. 13 shows a vertical FE-type cold electron source structure formed of a substrate 131, an emitter

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electrode 132, an insulating layer 133, an emitter 135, and an anode 136. The shape of an electron beam with which the anode is irradiated is indicated by 137.

This structure is of a Spindt type such that an opening
5 is formed in the insulating layer 133 and the gate electrode 134 provided on the cathode 132, and the emitter 135 having a conical shape is placed in the opening. (This type of structure is disclosed by, for example, C.A. Spindt, "Physical Properties of thin-film
10 field emission cathodes with molybdenum cones", J. Appl. Phys., 47, 5248 (1976).)

Fig. 14 shows a lateral FE structure formed of a substrate 141, an emitter electrode 142, an insulating layer 143, an emitter 145, and an anode 146. The shape
15 of an electron beam with which the anode is irradiated is indicated by 147. The emitter 145 having an acute extreme end and the gate electrode 144 for drawing out electrons from the extreme end of the emitter are disposed above and parallel to the substrate, and the
20 collector (anode) is formed above the gate electrode and the emitter electrode remote from the substrate (see USP 4,728,851, USP 4,904,895, etc.).

Also, Japanese Patent Application Laid-open No. 8-115652 discloses an electron-emitting device using
25 fibrous carbon which is deposited in a narrow gap by performing thermal cracking of an organic chemical compound gas on a catalyst metal.

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Also, since the beam of electrons drawn out spreads out, there is a need for a focusing electrode for limiting spreading of the beam. For example, Japanese Patent Application Laid-open No. 7-6714
5 discloses a method of converging electron trajectories by disposing an electrode for focusing electrons. This method, however, has the problem of an increase in complexity of the manufacturing process, a reduction in electron emission efficiency, etc., due to the addition
10 of the focusing electrode.

In ordinary lateral FE electron sources, electrons emitted from the cathode are liable to impinge on the opposed gate electrode. Therefore the structure of lateral FE electron sources has the problem of a
15 reduction in the efficiency (the ratio of the electron current flowing through the gate and the electron current reaching the anode) and considerable spreading of the beam shape on the anode.

20 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In view of the above-described problems, an object of the present invention is to provide an electron-emitting device in which the specific capacitance is reduced, which has a lower drive voltage, and which is
25 capable of obtaining a finer electron beam by controlling the trajectory of emitted electrons.

To achieve the above-described object, according



to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electron-emitting apparatus comprising:

a first electrode and a second electrode disposed on a surface of a substrate;

5 first voltage application means for applying to the second electrode a potential higher than a potential applied to the first electrode;

an electron-emitting member disposed on the first electrode;

10 a third electrode disposed so as to face the substrate, electrons emitted from the electron-emitting member reaching the third electrode; and

second voltage application means for applying to the third electrode a potential higher than each of the
15 potentials applied to the first and second electrodes, wherein a surface of the electron-emitting member is placed between a plane containing a surface of the second electrode and substantially parallel to the surface of the substrate and a plane containing a
20 surface of the third electrode and substantially parallel to the surface of the substrate. When the distance between the second electrode and the first electrode is d ; the potential difference applied between the second electrode and the first electrode by
25 the first voltage application means is V_1 ; the distance between the third electrode and the substrate is H ; and the potential difference between the potential applied

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to the third electrode by the second voltage application means and the potential applied to the first electrode by the first voltage application means is V_2 , then an electric field $E_1 = V_1/d$ is within the
5 range from 1 to 50 times an electric field $E_2 = V_2/H$.

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electron-emitting apparatus comprising:

10 a first electrode and a second electrode disposed on a surface of a substrate;

first voltage application means for applying to the second electrode a potential higher than a potential applied to the first electrode;

15 a plurality of fibers disposed on the first electrode, the fibers containing carbon as a main ingredient;

a third electrode disposed so as to face the substrate, electrons emitted from the fibers reaching the third electrode; and

20 second voltage application means for applying to the third electrode a potential higher than each of the potentials applied to the first and second electrodes, wherein a surface region of the fibers is placed between a plane containing a surface of the second
25 electrode and substantially parallel to the surface of the substrate and a plane containing a surface of the third electrode and substantially parallel to the

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surface of the substrate.

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In the above-described arrangement, the place at which the electric field concentrates is limited to one side of the region where an emitter material is formed, thereby enabling emitted electrons to be first drawn out toward the extraction electrode (gate electrode) and then made to reach the anode with substantially no possibility of impinging on the extraction electrode. As a result, the electron emission efficiency is improved. Also, there is substantially no possibility of scattering of electrons on the extraction electrode, so that the size of the beam spot obtained on the anode is smaller than that in the conventional device having the problem of scattering on the extraction electrode.

According to still another aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electron-emitting device comprising:

a fiber containing carbon as a main ingredient;
and

an electrode for controlling emission of electrodes from the fiber containing carbon as a main ingredient, wherein the fiber containing carbon as a main ingredient has a plurality of layered (laminated) graphenes so as not to be parallel to the axis direction of the fiber.

According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electron-emitting

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device comprising:

a first electrode and a second electrode disposed on a surface of a substrate, a gap being formed between the first and second electrodes; and

5 a fiber provided on the first electrode, the fiber containing carbon as a main ingredient, wherein the second electrode comprises an electrode for controlling emission of electrons from the fiber containing carbon as a main ingredient, and wherein the fiber containing
10 carbon as a main ingredient comprises graphene.

The electron-emitting device of the present invention can stably emit electrons in a low vacuum degree at an increased rate for a long time period.

According to the present invention, a light-
15 emitting member is provided on the anode in the electron-emitting apparatus or above the electron-emitting device to form a light-emitting device, an image display apparatus or the like capable of operating in a low vacuum degree and effecting high-
20 luminance emission/display for a long time period with stability.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

25 Figs. 1A and 1B are diagrams showing an example of a basic electron-emitting device in accordance with the present invention;

Figs. 2A and 2B are diagrams showing a second

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embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 3A and 3B are diagrams showing a third embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 4A and 4B are diagrams showing a fourth
5 embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 5A, 5B, 5C, and 5D are diagrams showing fabrication steps in a first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a diagram showing an arrangement for
10 operating the electron-emitting device of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a diagram showing an operating characteristic of the basic electron-emitting device of the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a diagram showing an example of the
15 configuration of a passive matrix circuit using a plurality of electron sources in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 9 is a diagram showing an example of the
20 construction of an image forming panel using the electron source of the present invention;

Fig. 10 is a diagram showing an example of a circuit for the image forming panel using the electron source of the present invention;

Fig. 11 is a diagram schematically showing the
25 structure of a carbon nanotube;

Fig. 12 is a diagram schematically showing the

structure of a graphite nanofiber;

Fig. 13 is a diagram showing a conventional vertical FE structure; and

Fig. 14 is a diagram showing an example of a conventional lateral FE structure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings. The description of components of the embodiments made below with respect to the size, material and shape of the components and the relative positions of the components is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention except for particular mention of specified details.

The operating voltage V_f of FE devices is generally determined by the electric field at an extreme end of an emitter obtained from the Poisson equation and by the current density of electron emission current according to the relational expression called "Fowler-Nordheim equation" with a work function of the electric field and the emitter portion used as a parameter.

A stronger electric field is obtained as the electric field necessary for emission of electrons as the distance D between the emitter extreme end and the gate electrode is smaller or the radius r of the

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emitter extreme end is smaller.

On the other hand, the maximum size X_d in the X-direction of the electron beam obtained on the anode (e.g., the maximum reach from the center of the circular beam shape 137 shown in Fig. 13) is expressed in such a form as to be proportional to (V_f/V_a) in simple calculation.

As is apparent from this relationship, an increase in V_f results in an increase in beam diameter.

Consequently, there is a need to minimize the distance D and the radius of curvature r in order to reduce V_f .

Beam shapes in conventional arrangements will be described with reference to Figs. 13 and 14. In Figs. 13 and 14, substrates which are corresponding components of the two arrangements are indicated by 131 and 141; emitter electrodes by 132 and 142; insulating layers by 133 and 143; emitters by 135 and 145; anodes by 136 and 146; the shapes of electron beams with which the anodes are irradiated by 137 and 147.

In the case of the Spindt type described above with reference to Fig. 13, when V_f is applied between the emitter 135 and the gate 134, the strength of the electric field at the extreme end of the projection of the emitter, 135 is increased and electrons are thereby taken out of a conical emitter portion about the extreme end into the vacuum.

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The electric field at the extreme end of the emitter is formed based on the shape of the extreme end of the emitter to have a certain finite area on the same, so that electrons are perpendicularly drawn out from the finite emitter extreme end area according to the potential.

Simultaneously, other electrons are emitted at various angles. Electrons emitted at larger angles are necessarily drawn toward the gate.

As a result, if the gate is formed so as to have a circular opening, the distribution of electrons on the anode 136 shown in Fig. 13 forms a substantially circular beam shape 137. That is, the shape of the beam obtained is closely related to the shape of the drawing gate and to the distance between the gate and the emitter.

In the case of the lateral FE electron source (Fig. 14) in which electrons are drawn out generally along one direction, an extremely strong electric field substantially parallel to the surface of the substrate 141 (lateral electric field) is produced between the emitter 145 and the gate 144, so that part 149 of electrons emitted from the emitter 145 are drawn into the vacuum above the gate 144 while the other electrons are taken into the gate electrode 144.

In the arrangement shown in Fig. 14, electric field vectors toward the anode 146 differ in direction

Therefore the distribution of electrons (beam spot) formed by emitted electrons on the anode 146 is

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above, electrons emitted from the emitter are first drawn out by the lateral electric field, fly toward the gate, and are then moved upward by the vertical electric field to reach the anode.

5 Important factors of this effect are the ratio of the strengths of the lateral and vertical electric fields and the relative position of the electron emission point.

10 When the lateral electric field is stronger than the vertical electric field by an order of magnitude, the trajectories of almost all of electrons drawn out from the emitter are gradually bent by radial potential produced by the lateral electric field so that the electrons fly toward the gate. A part of the electrons
15 impinging on the gate ejects again in a scattering manner. After ejection, however, the electrons repeat scattering while spreading out along the gate by forming elliptical trajectories again and again and while being reduced in number when ejecting until they
20 are caught by the vertical electric field. Only after the scattered electrons have exceeded an equipotential line formed by the gate potential (which line may be called "stagnation point"), they are moved upward by the vertical electric field.

25 When the lateral electric field and the vertical electric field are approximately equal in strength, the restraint imposed by the lateral electric field on

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electrons drawn out is reduced, although the trajectories of the electrons are bent by the radial potential. In this case, therefore, electron trajectories appear along which electrons travel to be caught by the vertical electric field without impinging on the gate.

It has been found that if the electron emission position at which electrons are emitted from the emitter is shifted from the gate plane toward the anode plane (see Fig. 6), emitted electrons can form trajectories such as to be caught by the vertical electric field with substantially no possibility of impinging on the gate when the lateral electric field and the vertical electric field are approximately equal in strength, that is, the ratio of the strength of the lateral electric field to that of the vertical electric field is approximately 1 to 1.

Also, a study made of the electric field ratio has shown that if the distance between the gate electrode 144 and the extreme end of the emitter electrode 145 is d ; the potential difference (between the gate electrode and the emitter electrode) when the device is driven is V_1 ; the distance between the anode and the substrate (element) is H ; and the potential difference between the anode and the cathode (emitter electrode) is V_2 , a trajectory along which electrons drawn out impinge on the gate is formed when the lateral electric field $E_1 =$

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V_1/d is 50 times or more stronger than the vertical electric field $E_2 = V_2/H$.

The inventor of the present invention has also found that a height s (defined as the distance between a plane containing a portion of a gate electrode 2 surface and substantially parallel to a substrate 1 surface and a plane containing an electron-emitting member 4 surface and substantially parallel to the substrate 1 surface (see Fig. 6)) can be determined such that substantially no scattering occurs on the gate electrode 2. The height s depends on the ratio of the vertical electric field and the lateral electric field (vertical electric field strength/lateral electric field strength). As the vertical-lateral electric field ratio is lower, the height s is lower. AS the lateral electric field is stronger, the necessary height s is higher.

The height set in a practical manufacturing process ranges from 10 nm to 10 μm .

In the conventional arrangement shown in Fig. 14, the gate 144 and the emitter (142, 145) are formed flush with each other along a common plane and the lateral electric field is stronger than the vertical electric field by an order of magnitude, so that there is a considerable tendency to reduce, by impingement on the gate, the amount of electrons drawn out into the vacuum.

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Further, in the conventional arrangement, the structure of the device is determined so as to increase the strength of the electric field in the lateral direction, so that the electron distribution on the anode 146 spreads widely.

As described above, to restrict the distribution of electrons reaching the anode 146, it is necessary (1) to reduce the drive voltage (V_f), (2) to unidirectionally draw out electrons, (3) to consider the trajectory of electrons and, if scattering on the gate occurs, (4) to consider the electron scattering mechanism (elastic scattering in particular).

Therefore the present invention aims to provide an electron-emitting device in which the distribution of electrons with which the anode surface is irradiated is made finer, and in which the electron emission efficiency is improved (the amount of emitted electrons absorbed in the gate electrode is reduced).

The structure of a novel electron-emitting device in accordance with the present invention will now be described below in detail.

Fig. 1A is a schematic plan view showing an example of an electron-emitting device in accordance with the present invention. Fig. 1B is a cross-sectional view taken along the line 1B-1B of Fig. 1A. Fig. 6 is schematic cross-sectional view of the electron-emitting apparatus of the present invention in

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a state where the electron-emitting apparatus having an anode disposed above the electron-emitting device of the present invention is being driven.

In Figs. 1A, 1B and 6 are illustrated an
5 insulating substrate 1, an extraction electrode 2 (also referred to as "gate electrode" or "second electrode"), a cathode 3 (also referred to as "first electrode"), an electron-emitting material 4 provided on the cathode 3 (also referred to as "electron-emitting member" or
10 "emitter material"), and an anode 61 (also referred to as "third electrode").

In the electron-emitting apparatus of the present invention, if as shown in Figs. 1A, 1B and 6 the distance by which the cathode 3 and the gate electrode
15 2 are spaced apart from each other is d ; the potential difference (the voltage between the cathode 3 and the gate electrode 2) when the electron-emitting device is driven is V_f ; the distance between the anode 61 and the surface of the substrate 1 on which the electron-
20 emitting device is arranged is H ; and the potential difference between the anode 61 and the cathode 3 is V_a , an electric field produced to drive the device (lateral electric field): $E_1 = V_f/d$ is set within the range from 1 to 50 times an electric field between the
25 anode and the cathode (vertical electric field): $E_2 = V_a/H$.

The proportion of electrons impinging on the gate

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electrode 2 in electrons emitted from the cathode 3 is reduced thereby. In this manner, a high-efficiency electron-emitting device capable of preventing an emitted electron beam from spreading out widely can be obtained.

The "lateral electric field" referred to in the description of the present invention can also be expressed as "electric field in a direction substantially parallel to the surface of substrate 1". It can also be expressed as "electric field in the direction in which the gate 2 is opposed to the cathode 3".

Also, the "vertical electric field" referred to in the description of the present invention can also be expressed as "electric field in a direction substantially perpendicular to the surface of substrate 1". It can also be expressed as "electric field in the direction in which the substrate 1 is opposed to the anode 61".

Further, in the electron-emitting apparatus of the present invention, a plane containing the surface of the electron-emitting member 4 and substantially parallel to the surface of the substrate 1 is spaced apart from a plane containing a portion of the surface of the gate electrode 2 and substantially parallel to the surface of the substrate 1 (see Fig. 6). In other words, in the electron-emitting apparatus of the

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present invention, a plane containing the surface of the electron-emitting member 4 and substantially parallel to the surface of the substrate 1 is placed between the anode 61 and a plane containing a portion of the surface of the gate electrode 2 and substantially parallel to the substrate surface (see Fig. 6).

Further, in the electron-emitting device of the present invention, the electron-emitting member 4 is placed at a height s (defined as the distance between the plane containing a portion of the surface of gate electrode 2 and substantially parallel to the surface of substrate 1 and the plane containing the surface of electron-emitting member 4 and substantially parallel to the surface of substrate 1 (see Fig. 6)) such that substantially no scattering occurs on the gate electrode 2.

The height s depends on the ratio of the vertical electric field and the lateral electric field (vertical electric field strength/lateral electric field strength). As the vertical-lateral electric field ratio is lower, the height s is lower. As the lateral electric field is stronger, the necessary height s is higher. Practically, the height is not less than 10 nm not more than 10 μm .

Examples of the insulating substrate 1 are the following substrates whose surfaces are sufficiently cleansed: quartz glass; glass in which the content of

an impurity such as Na is reduced by partial substitution by K, for example; a laminate formed in such a manner that SiO_2 is laminated by sputtering or the like on soda lime glass, a silicon substrate or the like; and an insulating substrate made of a ceramic such as alumina.

Each of the extraction electrode 2 and cathode 3 is an electrically conductive member formed on the surface of the substrate 1 by an ordinary vacuum film forming technique, such as evaporation or sputtering, or a photolithography technique so as to face each other. The material of the electrodes 2 and 3 is selected from, for example, carbon, metals, nitrides of metals, carbides of metals, borides of metals, semiconductors, and metallic compounds of semiconductors. The thickness of the electrodes 2 and 3 is set within the range from several ten nanometers to several ten microns. Preferably, the material of the electrodes 2 and 3 is a heat resistant material formed of carbon, a metal, a nitride of a metal or a carbide of a metal.

The material of the electrodes 2 and 3 constituting the electron-emitting device in accordance with the present invention are disposed on the surface of the substrate 1. Needless to say, the extraction electrode 2 and the cathode 3 are spaced apart from each other along a direction substantially parallel to

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5 In particular, in the case of growth of fibrous
carbon described below, the electrodes are preferably
formed of silicon having conductivity, e.g., doped
polysilicon or the like.

The emitter material (electron-emitting member) 4 may be formed in such a manner that a film deposited by an ordinary vacuum film forming method such as sputtering is worked into the shape of the emitter by using a technique such as reactive ion etching (RIE). Alternatively, it may be formed by growing needle crystals or whiskers by seed growth in chemical vapor deposition (CVD). In the case of RIE, the control of the emitter shape depends on the kind of the substrate used, the kind of gas, the gas pressure (flow rate), the etching time, the energy for forming plasma, etc. In a CVD forming process, the emitter shape is

controlled by selecting the kind of the substrate, the kind of gas, the flow rate, the growth temperature, etc.

5 Examples of the material used to form the emitter (electron-emitting member) 4 are carbides, such as TiC, ZrC, HfC, TaC, SiC, and WC, amorphous carbon, graphite, diamondlike carbon, carbon containing dispersed diamond, and carbon compounds.

10 According to the present invention, fibrous carbon is particularly preferably used as the material of the emitter (electron-emitting member) 4. "Fibrous carbon" referred to in the description of the present invention can also be expressed as "material in columnar form containing carbon as a main constituent" or "material
15 in filament form containing carbon as a main constituent". Further, "fibrous carbon" can also be expressed as "fibers containing carbon as a main constituent". More specifically, "fibrous carbon" in accordance with the present invention comprises carbon
20 nanotubes, graphite nanofibers, and amorphous carbon fibers. In particular, graphite nanofibers are most preferred as electron-emitting member 4.

The gap between the extraction electrode 2 and the cathode 3 and the drive voltage (the voltage applied
25 between the extraction electrode 2 and the cathode 3) may be determined so that the value of the lateral electric field necessary for emission of electrons from

the cathode material used is 1 to 50 times larger than that of the vertical electric field necessary for forming an image, as described above.

In a case where a light-emitting member such as a phosphor is provided on the anode, the necessary vertical electric field is, preferably, within the 10^{-1} to 10 V/ μ m range. For example, in a case where the gap between the anode and the cathode is 2 mm and 10 kV is applied between the anode and the cathode, the vertical electric field is 5 V/ μ m. In this case, the emitter material (electron-emitting member) 4 to be used has an electron-emitting electric field value of 5 V/ μ m or higher. The gap and the drive voltage may be determined in correspondence with the selected electron-emitting electric field value.

An example of a material having an electric field threshold of several V/ μ m is fibrous carbon. Each of Figs. 11 and 12 shows an example of the configuration of fibrous carbon. In each of Figs. 11 and 12, the configuration is schematically shown at the optical microscope level (to 1,000 times) in the left-hand section, at the scanning electron microscope level (to 30,000 times) in the middle section, and at the transmission electron microscope level (to 1,000,000 times) in the right-hand section.

A graphene structure formed into a cylinder such as that shown in Fig. 11 is called a carbon nanotube (a

multilayer cylindrical graphene structure is called a multiwall nanotube). Its threshold value is minimized when the tube end is opened.

The fibrous carbon shown in Fig. 12 may be produced at a comparatively low temperature. Fibrous carbon having such a configuration is composed of a graphene layered body (thus, it may be referred to as "graphite nanofiber", and has an amorphous structure whose ratio is increased with temperature). More specifically, "graphite nanofiber" designates a fibrous substance in which graphenes are layered (laminated) in the longitudinal direction thereof (in the axis direction of the fiber). In other words, graphite nanofiber is a fibrous substance in which a plurality of graphenes are arranged and layered (laminated) so as not to be parallel to the fiber axis, as shown in Fig. 12.

On the other hand, a carbon nanotube is a fibrous substance in which graphenes are arranged (in cylindrical shape) around the longitudinal direction (fiber axis direction). In other words, it is a fibrous substance in which graphenes are arranged substantially parallel to the fiber axis.

One layer of graphite is called "graphene" or
25 "graphene sheet". More specifically, ~~graphite is~~
formed in such a manner that carbon planes on which
carbon atoms are arrayed so as to form regular hexagons

Each type of fibrous carbon has an electron emission threshold value of about 1 to 10 V/ μ m and is therefore preferred as the material of the emitter (electron-emitting member) 4 in accordance with the present invention.

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from the viewpoint of reducing the influence on other components and limiting the manufacturing cost.

Further, the characteristic of Pd that resides in enabling oxides to be reduced by hydrogen at a low temperature (room temperature) may be utilized. That is, palladium oxide may be used as a seed forming material.

If hydrogen reduction using palladium oxide is performed, an initial agglomeration seed can be formed at a comparatively low temperature (equal to or lower than 200°C) without metallic film thermal agglomeration or ultrafine particle forming/deposition conventionally used as ordinary seed forming techniques.

The above-mentioned hydrocarbon gas may be, for example, acetylene, ethylene, methane, propane, or propylene. Further, CO or CO₂ gas or vapor of an organic solvent such as ethanol or acetone may be used in some case.

In the device of the present invention, the region where the emitter (electron-emitting member) exists will be referred to as "emitter region" regardless of contribution to emission of electrons.

The position of the electron emission point (electron-emitting portion) in the "emitter region" and the electron-emitting operation will be described with reference to Figs. 6 and 7.

The electron-emitting device having the distance

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Between the cathode 3 and the extraction electrode 2 of the electron-emitting device, a voltage of about several ten volts was applied as drive voltage V_f from a power supply (not shown) ("first voltage application means" or "first potential application means"). Device current I_f flowing between the electrodes 2 and 3 and electron emission current I_e flowing through the anode were measured.

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(an electric field (the direction of an electric field) substantially parallel to the surface of the substrate 1, and that the concentration of the electric field is maximized at the point on a portion of the electron-emitting member 4 closest to the anode and facing the gap, as indicated by 64. It is thought that electrons are emitted mainly from the portion of the electron-emitting material in the vicinity of this electric field concentration point, where the concentration of the electric field is maximized. An I_e characteristic such as shown in Fig. 7 was obtained. That is, I_e rises abruptly at a voltage about half the applied voltage. The I_f characteristic (not shown) was similar to the I_e characteristic but the value of I_f was sufficiently smaller than that of I_e .

An electron source obtained by arranging a plurality of the electron-emitting devices in accordance with the present invention will be described with reference to Fig. 8. In Fig. 8 are illustrated an electron source substrate 81, X-direction wiring 82, Y-direction wiring 83, electron-emitting device 84 in accordance with the present invention, and a connecting conductor 85.

X-direction wiring 82 has m conductors $DX1, DX2, \dots, DXm$, which may be constituted by, for example, a conductive metal formed by vacuum evaporation, printing, sputtering, or the like. The material, film

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thickness, and width of the wiring are selected according to a suitable design. Y-direction wiring 83 has n conductors DY1, DY2, ... DYn and is formed in the same manner as X-direction wiring 82. An interlayer insulating layer (not shown) is provided between the m conductors of X-direction wiring 82 conductors and the n conductors of Y-direction wiring 83 to electrically separate these conductors (each of m and n is a positive integer).

The interlayer insulating layer (not shown) is, for example, a SiO₂ layer formed by vacuum evaporation, printing, sputtering, or the like. For example, the interlayer insulating film is formed in the desired shape over the whole or part of the surface of the substrate 81 on which X-direction wiring 82 has been formed and the film thickness, material and fabrication method are selected to ensure withstanding against the potential difference at the intersections of the conductors of X-direction wiring 82 and Y-direction wiring 83 in particular. The conductors of X-direction wiring 82 and Y-direction wiring 83 are respectively extended outward as external terminals.

Pairs of electrodes (not shown) constituting electron-emitting devices 84 are electrically connected to the m conductors of X-direction wiring 82 and the n conductors of Y-direction wiring 83 by connecting conductors 85 made of a conductive metal or the like.

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The materials forming wiring 82 and wiring 83, the material forming the connecting conductors 85 and the materials forming the pairs of device electrodes may be entirely constituted of common constituent elements or partially constituted of common constituent elements, or may be constituted of different constituent elements. These materials are selected from, for example, the above-described device electrode materials. If the materials of the device electrodes and the wiring materials are the same, the wiring conductors connected to the device electrodes can be considered to be device electrodes.

A scanning signal application means (not shown) for applying scanning signals for selecting the rows of electron-emitting devices 84 arranged in the X-direction is connected to X-direction wiring 82. On the other hand, a modulation signal generation means for modulating voltages applied to the columns of electron-emitting devices 84 arranged in the Y-direction according to input signals is connected to Y-direction wiring 83. The drive voltage applied to each electron-emitting device is supplied as a voltage corresponding to the difference between the scanning signal and the modulation signal applied to the element.

In the above-described arrangement, each device can be selected by using the passive-matrix wiring to

be driven independently.

An image forming apparatus constructed by using an electron source having such a passive matrix array will be described with reference to Fig. 9. Fig. 9

5 schematically shows an example of the display panel of the image forming apparatus. Referring to Fig. 9, a plurality of electron-emitting devices are disposed on an electron source substrate 81, which is fixed on a rear plate 91. A face plate 96 has a glass substrate
10 93, a phosphor film 94 provided as a light emitting member on the internal surface of the glass substrate 93, a metal back (anode) 95, etc. The rear plate 91 and the face plate 96 are connected to a supporting frame 92 by using frit glass or the like. An envelop
15 97 is formed by being seal-bonded by baking in, for example, atmospheric air, a vacuum or in nitrogen in the 400 to 500°C temperature range for 10 minutes or longer.

The envelop 97, as described above, is constituted
20 by the face plate 96, the supporting frame 92, and the rear plate 91. The rear plate 91 is provided mainly for the purpose of reinforcing the substrate 81. If the substrate 81 itself has sufficiently high strength, there is no need to separately provide the rear plate
25 91. That is, the supporting frame 92 may be directly seal-bonded to the substrate 81 and the envelop 97 may be formed by the frame plate 96, the supporting frame

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(Embodiment 1)

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(Step 1)

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The substrate was baked at 200°C, atmospheric air was evacuated, and a heat treatment was then performed in 2% hydrogen flow diluted with nitrogen. At this stage, particles 52 having a diameter of about 3 to 10 nm were formed on the surface of the cathode 3. The density of the particles at this stage was estimated at about 10^{11} to 10^{12} particles/cm² (Fig. 5C).

Subsequently, a heat treatment was performed in a 0.1% ethylene flow diluted with nitrogen at 500°C for 10 minutes. The state after the heat treatment was observed with a scanning electron microscope to find that a multiplicity of fibrous carbon 4 having a diameter of about 10 to 25 nm and extending like fibers while curving or bending had been formed in the Pd-coated region. The thickness of the fibrous carbon layer was about 500 nm (Fig. 5D).

This electron-emitting device was set in the vacuum apparatus 60 shown in Fig. 6. A sufficiently high vacuum of about 2×10^{-5} Pa was produced by the evacuating pump 62. Voltage $V_a = 10$ kV was applied as anode voltage to the anode 61 distanced by $H = 2$ mm from the device, as shown in Fig. 6. Also, a pulse voltage of $V_f = 20$ V was applied as drive voltage to the device. Device current I_f and electron emission current I_e thereby caused were measured.

The I_f and I_e characteristics of the electron-emitting device were as shown in Fig. 7. That is, I_e rises abruptly at a voltage about half the applied voltage, and a current of about $1\mu A$ was measured as electron emission current I_e at a V_f value of 15 V. On the other hand, the I_f characteristic was similar to the I_e characteristic but the value of I_f was smaller than that of I_e by an order of magnitude or more.

The obtained beam had a generally rectangular shape having a longer side along the Y-direction and a shorter side in the X-direction. The beam width was measured with respect to different gaps of $1\mu m$ and $5\mu m$ between the electrodes 2 and 3 while V_f was fixed at 15 V and the distance H to the anode was fixed at 2 mm. Table 1 shows the results of this measurement.

Table 1

	$V_a = 5\text{ kV}$	$V_a = 10\text{ kV}$
Gap: $1\mu m$	$60\mu m$ in x-direction $170\mu m$ in y-direction	$30\mu m$ in x-direction $150\mu m$ in y-direction
Gap: $5\mu m$	$93\mu m$ in x-direction $170\mu m$ in y-direction	$72\mu m$ in x-direction $150\mu m$ in y-direction

It was possible to change the necessary electric field for driving by changing the fibrous carbon growth conditions. In particular, the average particle size of Pd particles formed by reduction of palladium oxide

5 The fibrous carbon of this electron-emitting
device was observed with the transmission electron
microscope to recognize a structure in which graphenes
are layered in the fiber axis direction, as shown in
the right-hand section of Fig. 12. The graphene
10 stacking intervals (in the Z-axis direction) resulting
from heating at a lower temperature, about 500°C were
indefinite and was 0.4 nm. As the heating temperature
was increased, the grating intervals became definite.
The intervals resulting from heating at 700°C were 0.34
15 nm, which is close to 0.335 nm in graphite.
(Embodiment 2)

Fig. 2 shows a second embodiment of the present invention.

In this embodiment, an electron-emitting device was fabricated in the same manner as that in the first embodiment except that the cathode 3 corresponding to that in the first embodiment had a thickness of 500 nm and fibrous carbon provided as electron-emitting material 4 had a thickness of 100 nm. Currents I_f and I_e in the fabricated electron-emitting device were measured.

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point was positively heightened (toward the anode) relative to the gate electrode by increasing the thickness of the cathode 3. Trajectories along which electrons impinge on the gate were thereby reduced, thereby preventing a reduction in efficiency and occurrence of a beam-thickening phenomenon.

Also in this device arrangement, the electron emission current I_e at $V_f = 20V$ was about $1\mu A$. On the other hand, the I_f characteristic was similar to the I_e characteristic but the value of I_f was smaller than that of I_e by two orders of magnitude.

The results of measurement of the beam diameter in this embodiment were substantially the same as those shown in Table 1.

(Embodiment 3)

Fig. 3 shows a third embodiment of the present invention.

In this embodiment, in the step corresponding to step 2 in the first embodiment, palladium oxide 51 was provided on the cathode 3 and in the gap between the electrodes 2 and 3. Pd oxide was provided in the gap in such a manner as to extend from the cathode 3 to a point near the midpoint of the gap. Excepting step 2, this embodiment is the same as the first embodiment.

The electric field in the electron-emitting device of this embodiment was twice as strong as that in the first embodiment because the gap was reduced, thereby enabling the drive voltage to be reduced to about 8 V.

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(Embodiment 4)

Fig. 4 shows a fourth embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment step 1 and step 2 described above with respect to the first embodiment are changed as described below.

(Step 1)

A quartz substrate was used as substrate 1. After sufficiently cleansing the substrate, a 5 nm thick Ti film and a 30 nm thick poly-Si film (arsenic doped) were successively deposited by sputtering on the substrate as cathode 3.

Next, a resist pattern was formed by photolithography using a positive photoresist (AZ1500/ from Clariant Corporation).

Next, dry etching was performed on the poly-Si layer and Ti layer by using CF_4 gas, with the patterned photoresist used as a mask. Cathode 3 was thereby formed.

The quartz substrate was then etched to a depth of about 500 nm by using a mixed acid formed of hydrofluoric acid and ammonium fluoride.

Subsequently, a 5 nm thick Ti film and a 30 nm thick Pt film were successively deposited on the substrate as gate electrode 2 by again performing sputtering. After removing the photoresist from the cathode, a resist pattern was again formed by using a positive photoresist (AZ1500/ from Clariant

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Next, dry etching was performed on the Pt layer and Ti layer by using Ar, with the patterned photoresist used as a mask. Electrode 2 was thereby
5 formed so that the step formed between the electrodes functions as a gap.

This step was followed by the same steps as those in the first embodiment.

Because the height of the electron-emitting material 4 (film thickness) was increased relative to that of the gate electrode, electrons were drawn out not only from the upper portion of the electron-emitting material 4 but also from an intermediate portion. Thus, the arrangement in this embodiment has the effect of preventing a reduction in efficiency due to impingement of electrons on the gate electrode and occurrence of a beam-thickening phenomenon.

An electron source obtained by arranging a

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plurality of the electron-emitting devices fabricated the first embodiment and an image forming apparatus using this electron source will be described with reference to Figs. 8, 9, and 10. In Fig. 8 are
5 illustrated an electron source substrate 81, X-direction wiring 82, Y-direction wiring 83, electron-emitting devices 84 in accordance with the present invention, and connecting conductors 85.

The electron source with matrix wiring shown in
10 Fig. 8, in which the device capacitance is increased by arranging a plurality of electron-emitting devices, has a problem that, even when a short pulse produced by pulse-width modulation is applied, the waveform is dulled or distorted by capacitive components to cause
15 failure to obtain the necessary grayscale level, for example. In this embodiment, therefore, a structure is adopted in which an interlayer insulating layer is provided by the side of the electron-emitting region to limit the increase in capacitive components in regions
20 other than the electron-emitting region.

Referring to Fig. 8, X-direction wiring 82 has m conductors DX1, DX2, ... DXm, which has a thickness of about 1 μm and a width of 300 μm , and which is formed of an aluminum wiring material by evaporation. The
25 material, film thickness, and width of the wiring conductors are selected according to a suitable design. Y-direction wiring 83 has n conductors DY1, DY2, ...

DYn, which has a thickness of 5 μm and width of 100 μm , and which is formed in the same manner as X-direction wiring 82. An interlayer insulating layer (not shown) is provided between the m conductors of X-direction wiring 82 and the n conductors of Y-direction wiring 83 to electrically separate these conductors (each of m and n is a positive integer).

The interlayer insulating layer (not shown) is, for example, a SiO_2 layer formed by sputtering or the like and having a thickness of about 0.8 μm . For example, the interlayer insulating film is formed in the desired shape over the whole or part of the surface of the substrate 81 on which X-direction wiring 82 has been formed. Specifically, the thickness of the interlayer insulating film is determined so as to ensure withstanding against the potential difference at the intersections of the conductors of X-direction wiring 82 and Y-direction wiring 83. The conductors of X-direction wiring 82 and Y-direction wiring 83 are respectively extended outward as external terminals.

Pairs of electrodes (not shown) constituting electron-emitting devices 84 are electrically connected to the m conductors of X-direction wiring 82 and the n conductors of Y-direction wiring 83 by connecting conductors 85 made of a conductive metal or the like.

A scanning signal application means (not shown) for applying scanning signals for selecting the rows of

electron-emitting devices 84 arranged in the X-direction is connected to X-direction wiring 82. On the other hand, a modulation signal generation means for modulating voltages applied to the columns of electron-emitting devices 84 arranged in the Y-direction according to input signals is connected to Y-direction wiring 83. The drive voltage applied to each electron-emitting device is supplied as a voltage corresponding to the difference between the scanning signal and the modulation signal applied to the element. In the present invention, Y-direction wiring 83 is connected to the gate electrodes 2 of the electron-emitting devices described above with respect to the first embodiment, while X-direction wiring is connected to the cathodes 3 of the elements. This connection realizes a beam convergence effect which characterizes the present invention.

In the above-described arrangement, each element can be selected by using the passive-matrix wiring to be driven independently.

An image forming apparatus constructed by using an electron source having such a passive matrix array will be described with reference to Fig. 9. Fig. 9 is a diagram showing the display panel of the image forming apparatus.

Referring to Fig. 9, the electron source having the plurality of electron-emitting devices described

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above with reference to Fig. 8 is provided on an
electron source substrate 81. The substrate 81 is
fixed on a rear plate 91. A face plate 96 has a glass
substrate 93, a phosphor film 94 provided as a light
5 emitting member on the internal surface of the glass
substrate 93, a metal back 95, etc. The rear plate 91
and the face plate 96 are connected to a supporting
frame 92 by using frit glass or the like. An envelop
97 is formed by being seal-bonded by baking in a vacuum
10 at about a temperature of 450°C for 10 minutes. The
electron-emitting devices 84 correspond to the
electron-emitting regions shown in Fig. 9. X-direction
wiring 82 and Y-direction wiring 83 are connected to
the pairs of electrodes of the electron-emitting
15 elements in this embodiment.

The envelop 97, as described above, is constituted
by the face plate 96, the supporting frame 92, and the
rear plate 91. A supporting member (not shown) called
a spacer is provided between the face plate 96 and the
20 rear plate 91 to enable the envelop 97 to have a
sufficiently high strength for resisting atmospheric
pressure.

After fabrication of the phosphor film, the metal
back 95 is made by smoothing the inner surface of the
25 phosphor film (ordinarily called "filming") and by
thereafter depositing Al by vacuum evaporation or the
like.

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The sync signal separation circuit 106 is a circuit for separating sync signal components and luminance signal components from an NTSC television signal externally supplied. This circuit can be formed by using an ordinary frequency separation (filter) circuit, etc. The sync signal separated by the sync signal separation circuit 106 is formed of a vertical sync signal and a horizontal sync signal. However, it is shown as Tsync in the figure for convenience sake. Image luminance signal components separated from the television signal are shown as DATA signal for convenience sake. The DATA signal is input to a shift register 104.

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of the applied voltage is lower than the electron emission threshold value, but an electron beam is output when the value of the applied voltage is equal to or higher than the electron emission threshold value. In this case, the strength of the electron beam can be controlled by changing the pulse crest value V_m . Also, the total amount of charge of the output electron beam can be controlled by changing the pulse width P_w .

Therefore, a voltage modulation method, a pulse-width modulation method or the like can be used as a method for modulating the electron-emitting device according to the input signal. If the voltage modulation method is carried out, a voltage modulation type of circuit capable of generating voltage pulses having a constant duration, and modulating the pulse crest value according to input data may be used as modulation signal generator 107.

If the pulse-width modulation method is carried out, a pulse-width modulation type of circuit capable of generating voltage pulses having a constant crest value and modulating the pulse width of the voltage pulses according to input data may be used as modulation signal generator 107.

Each of the shift register 104 and the line memory 105 used in this embodiment is of a digital signal type.

In this embodiment, a digital to analog converter

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circuit, for example, is used in the modulation signal generator 107 and an amplifier circuit, etc., are added if necessary. For example, in the case where the pulse-width modulation method is used, a combination of a high-speed oscillator, a counter for counting the number of waves output from the oscillator, and a comparator for comparing the output value of the counter and the output value of the above-described memory is used in the modulation signal generator 107.

The configuration of the image forming apparatus described above is an example of the image forming apparatus to which the present invention can be applied. Various modifications and changes can be made therein on the basis of the technical spirit of the present invention. The input signal is not limited to the above-mentioned NTSC signal. Those in accordance with the PAL system and the SECAM system and other TV signals corresponding to a larger number of scanning lines (e.g., those for the MUSE system and other high-definition TV systems) may also be used.

Images were displayed on an image display apparatus made in accordance with this embodiment. High-luminance high-definition images had been displayed on the image display apparatus with stability for a long period of time.

According to the present invention, as described above, the specific capacitance of an electron-emitting

5 An image forming apparatus having high resolution,
e.g., a color flat-screen television can be realized by
using the electron-emitting device in accordance with
the present invention.